



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
89 Jefferson Blvd.  
Warwick RI 02888  
(401) 941-4500

Chairman Ella Germani  
Commissioner Kate F. Racine  
Commissioner Robert B. Holbrook

**By e-mail or facsimile**

**PROCEDURAL MEMORANDUM**

To: Service List Docket No. 3569

From: Luly Massaro, Commission Clerk

Re: **Investigation Into the Feasibility of Using Credit Card as a Method of Paying Utilities Bills– Docket No. 3569**

Date: December 4, 2003

Thank you for your participation at this morning's pre-hearing conference held at the Commission's office. At this time, the scope of this docket would be to get an understanding of how the process works for accepting credit cards as a method for paying utility bills and what ramifications would be. Specifically, who would bear the cost for this type of transaction, whether such process would be a benefit or a cost to the ratepayer and what the impact would be on the utility's uncollectible balances. In the end, this docket could result in a negotiated rulemaking proceeding if the Commission determines that it is feasible for utilities to recover the costs associated with accepting credit cards as a payment method for utility bills. A utility choosing not to participate would be bound by any decision or rules and regulations promulgated by the Commission. At this time, while the docket officially relates to credit cards, the participants discussed many different forms of electronic payments, which may be of interest as this docket progresses.

I am forwarding a copy of the Commission's 1<sup>st</sup> set of data requests that were distributed to the participants this morning. Responses to the data requests are to be submitted by December 29, 2003. Please file an original and three (3) copies of the data response with the Commission. Also, e-mail your response to the attached service list.

A technical session will be held at the Commission's office at 9:30 a.m., February 10, 2004 to receive a presentation on this process. Based on the responses received, the Commission will determine the scope of the technical session and circulate an agenda to the service list.

cc: Commissioners

Commission Staff  
Division Staff

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IN RE: INVESTIGATION INTO CREDIT CARD :  
PAYMENTS AND COST RECOVERY : DOCKET NO. 3569

**COMMISSION'S FIRST SET OF DATA REQUESTS**

- 1-1. Please list all methods by which a customer may pay his or her bill, including locations, form of payment accepted, and whether or not there is a cost to the customer paying the bill or to the company associated with each method of payment.
- 1-2. If one of the methods of payment listed in response to COM 1-1 is credit cards, please provide the following information:
  - a) Which credit cards are accepted;
  - b) Which company/bank is used to process the transactions for each card;
  - c) What is the vendor fee associated with each of the cards;
  - d) For each twelve-month period over the last twenty-four months, what the vendor fee has totaled;
  - e) Who bears the cost of the vendor fees;
  - f) Whether or not the utility advised the Commission that it accepts credit cards;
  - g) Whether or not the Commission has granted express authority in a docket regarding the use and/or cost recovery of fees associated with credit cards.
- 1-3. Has the utility (or one of its affiliates) undertaken any studies to determine the impact the acceptance of credit cards has on uncollectibles? If so, please provide copies of the results and methodology.
- 1-4. If the utility does not currently accept credit cards and desires to start, please indicate how the utility proposes to recover the vendor fees.